Sirhan Is Described as 'Computer-Killer'

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "He was gradually programming himself exactly like a computer is programed by its magnetic tape, programming himself for the coming assassination. . .

"He was confused, bewildered and partially intoxicated. The mirrors in the hotel lobby, the flashing lights, the general confusion—this was like pressing the button which starts the computer."

In this setting, a psychiatrist says, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy came under the gun of Sirhan Bishara Sirhan—a robot killer in a self-induced trance; an unknowing instrument of assassination.

"IT IS MY opinion that through chance, circumstances, and a succession of unrelated events, Sirhan found himself in the physical situation in which the assassination occurred," Dr. Bernard L. Diamond said yesterday at Sirhan's murder trial. The shooting was in a pantry of the Ambassador Hotel.

The portrayal of a computerized killer was a stunning summary of Diamond's eight examinations of Sirhan in his jail cell —including a frenetic re-enactment by a hypnotized Sirhan of the moment he shot the senator from New York.

Diamond, 65, a professor of psychiatry, law and criminology at the University of California at Berkeley, was to return to the stand today.

This mental illness developed as he grew older "and his fanatical hatred and fear of the Jews increased with each radio and television broadcast concerning the tension in the Middle East."

Then the prosecution asked for the rest of the day off to study his testimony and court was adjourned until tomorrow.

"I AGREE that this is an absurd and preposterous story, unlikely and incredible," Diamond said, his face turned to the jury. "The crime itself was a tragically absurd and preposterous event, unlikely and incredible."

The tragedy was ordained, Diamond said, with Sirhan's exposure to violence and death in Jerusalem in 1948 when his family—Arabs—became refugees in the partition of Palestine and establishment of Israel as a Jewish homeland.